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ITEM NO: 3

DATE: 28 MARCH 1974

**SUBJECT: IRAQ-KURDS--FBIS REPORT OF MILITARY MOVES**

REF : FBIS [REDACTED] 28 MAR 79, UNCLAS

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A LEBANESE NEWSPAPER REPORTED TODAY THAT THE IRAQI ARMY HAS MOVED NORTHWARD AND IS PROCEEDING TO ALL CITIES IN THE KURDISH AREA AS "SPECIAL SECURITY FORCES." THE PAPER FURTHER STATES THAT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT WILL MOVE TO IMPLEMENT ITS KURDISH AUTONOMY PLAN THROUGH KURDISH GROUPS THAT ARE FRIENDLY TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE PAPER ALSO QUOTES A "SOURCE CLOSE TO THE GOVERNMENT" AS SAYING THAT THE REGIME WILL DO ITS UTMOST TO PRESERVE THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY AND THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE, AND AS NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS THUS FAR AVOIDED AN ALL-OUT CONFRONTATION WITH THE KURDS.

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REFERENCE TO THE ARMY'S MOVEMENT NORTHWARD PROBABLY REFERS TO THE REDEPLOYMENT THAT HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR WEEKS NOW. THE MOVEMENT INTO THE CITIES IS NEW BUT IS FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO IMPLEMENT ITS PLAN BY DECREE IN THE POPULATION CENTERS RATHER THAN SEEK AN IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION WITH THE KURDS. GARZANI HAS ALREADY INDICATED THAT THE KURDISH REBELS WILL NOT TRY TO DEFEND POPULATION CENTERS WHERE THEY WOULD BE AT A DISADVANTAGE BUT WOULD MOVE INTO THE MOUNTAINS WHERE THE TERRAIN WOULD GIVE THEM THE ADVANTAGE. SKIRMISHES AND REBEL FORAYS WILL CONTINUE BUT NEITHER SIDE APPEARS TO WANT A MAJOR MILITARY CONFRONTATION AT THIS TIME. IF THE KURDS SUCCEED IN FRUSTRATING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DEVELOP AT LEAST A FACADE OF "KURDISH AUTONOMY," THE DANGER OF SERIOUS FIGHTING WILL INCREASE. FURTHERMORE IF THE KURDISH REBELS ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE OIL INSTALLATIONS IN THE KIRKUK AREA OR OTHER IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT INSTALLATIONS IN THE NORTH, GOVERNMENT FORCES PROBABLY WILL RESPOND WITH HEAVY ATTACKS ON KURDISH STRONGHOLDS. HOWEVER, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY INTENDS TO TRY TO IMPOSE ITS PLAN THROUGH

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DECREE AND A MINIMUM USE OF FORCE RATHER THAN THROUGH A MASSIVE MILITARY EFFORT AGAINST THE BARZANI-LED KURDISH REBELS. THERE ARE ALSO SUGGESTIONS THAT BARZANI, HIMSELF, FACED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ALL-OUT WAR, IS SEEKING OUTSIDE MEDIATION OF THE KURDISH DISPUTE WITH THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT. E-2 IMPDET.H

(SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION: MEA DIV AND NIO [REDACTED])

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